IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 5-7 and 13-15 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subjected matter. Please amend claims 1-4 and 8-12, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus for supplying an image forming apparatus having a plurality of print elements with image data that has ~~been performed~~ undergone a halftoning process by using a threshold mask which is corrected based on an output characteristic of the image forming apparatus, comprising:

output characteristic ~~detection~~ analyzing means for ~~detecting~~ analyzing the output characteristic ~~from results~~ based on line-by-line density output by each of the plurality of print elements of the image forming apparatus;

mask generating means for generating the threshold mask, which is used in the halftoning process, by correcting a threshold mask based upon the output characteristic ~~detected;~~ analyzed; and

supplying means for subjecting image data output to the image forming apparatus to the halftoning ~~processing~~ process using the generated threshold mask, and supplying the image forming apparatus with the image data after the halftoning process ~~thereof, and~~ thereof,

wherein the mask generating means generates the threshold mask by using potential weighted by the output characteristic ~~detected~~ analyzed by the output characteristic ~~detect on~~ analyzing means.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~said image forming apparatus has a plurality of print elements and~~ the output characteristic is ~~an~~ a line-by-line average density ~~variation~~ output by each of the plurality of print elements of the image forming apparatus ~~from one of said plurality of print elements to the next~~.

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3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~said image forming apparatus has a plurality of print elements and~~ the output characteristic is <u>a</u> <u>barycenter of lines, output by each of the plurality of print elements, whose average</u> <u>densities exceed a predetermined value</u> ~~an amount of printing position deviation from one~~ ~~of said plurality of print elements to the next~~.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said output characteristic ~~detection~~ <u>analyzing</u> means includes:

image reading means for reading results output by the image forming apparatus; and

density detection means for detecting line-by-line average ~~pixel~~ density from results output by said image reading means.

5-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) An image forming system comprising the image processing apparatus set forth in claim 1, and an image forming apparatus.

9. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for supplying an image forming apparatus <u>having a plurality of print elements</u> with image data that has ~~been~~ ~~performed~~ <u>undergone a</u> halftoning process by using a threshold mask which is corrected based on an output characteristic of the image forming apparatus, comprising:

an output characteristic ~~detection~~ <u>analyzing</u> step ~~for detecting~~ <u>of analyzing</u> the output characteristic ~~from results~~ <u>based on line-by-line density</u> output by <u>each of the</u> <u>plurality of print elements of</u> the image forming apparatus;

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a mask generating step ~~for~~ <u>of</u> generating the threshold mask, which is used in the halftoning process, by correcting a threshold mask based upon the output characteristic ~~detected;~~ <u>analyzed; and</u>

a supplying step ~~for~~ <u>of</u> subjecting image data output to the image forming apparatus to the halftoning ~~processing~~ <u>process</u> using the generated threshold mask, and supplying the image forming apparatus with the image data after the halftoning process ~~thereof, and~~ <u>thereof,</u>

wherein the mask generating step ~~generating~~ <u>generates</u> the threshold mask by using potential weighted by the output characteristic ~~detected~~ <u>analyzed</u> by the output characteristic ~~detection~~ <u>analyzing</u> step.

10. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein ~~said image forming apparatus has a plurality of print elements and~~ the output characteristic is ~~an~~ <u>line-by line</u> average density ~~variation~~ <u>output by each of the plurality of the print elements of the image forming apparatus</u> ~~from one of said plurality of print elements to the next~~.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein ~~said image forming apparatus has a plurality of print elements and~~ the output characteristic is <u>a</u> <u>barycenter of lines, output by each of the plurality of print elements, whose average densities exceed a predetermined value</u> ~~an amount of printing position deviation from one of said plurality of print elements to the next~~.

12. (Amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein said output characteristic ~~detection~~ <u>analyzing</u> step includes:

an image reading step of reading results output by the image forming apparatus; and

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a density detection step of detecting line-by-line average pixel density from results output by said image reading means.

13-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) A storage medium storing a program capable of being executed by a computer, wherein the computer which executes said program is made to function as the image processing apparatus set forth in claim 1.

17. (Original) A storage medium storing the image forming method, which is set forth in claim 9, as a program capable of being executed by a computer.